



# Interpersonal Communication of Madrasah Heads in Increasing Teacher Work Motivation

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/bamj.v1i2.480>

## Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of interpersonal communication of the principal in improving teacher work motivation in madrasahs. This study is based on the importance of interpersonal communication of the principal in motivating teachers. The type of research in this study is descriptive qualitative research. The informants of this study are key informants and supporting informants. Data collection techniques use observation, interview and documentation techniques. Data analysis techniques use data reduction, data presentation and data verification. The findings of the study indicate that the participatory leadership style of the madrasah principal significantly increases teacher motivation and involvement in the learning process. The application of effective interpersonal communication strategies, including openness, empathy, and support, contributes to the creation of mutual trust and a harmonious work environment. Although there are inhibiting factors such as lack of resources and administrative support, the existence of supporting factors such as clear communication and a positive school culture increases teacher work motivation. This study is expected to contribute to the understanding of the factors that influence teacher motivation and performance in educational institutions through leadership.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 14 Feb 2024

Revised 18 March 2024

Accepted 1 May 2024

## KEYWORDS

Interpersonal  
Communication, Principal,  
Teacher Work Motivation

## INTRODUCTION

Quality resources are essential requirements for achieving a high standard of education, particularly within the context of a madrasah. The leadership of the madrasah, along with the educators, plays a pivotal role in fulfilling the vision set by the institution (Fathih et al., 2021; Hamdanah & Sholihah, 2023; Mulyadi & Sobri, 2024; M. Zaini, 2024). The effectiveness of a madrasah hinges on its ability to manage operations efficiently and ensure that educators carry out their responsibilities effectively (Aisyah & Mustofa, 2024; Arifin, 2024; N. Naufal & Maksum, 2024). A key indicator of success in this environment is the capacity for personal supervision and communication between the madrasah administration and teachers, which helps identify and address obstacles faced by educators.

Interpersonal communication, defined as the exchange of information between individuals, is crucial in this educational setting. This process emphasizes unifying psychological elements such as perception, understanding, and motivation, all of which can influence behavioral changes through effective communication (Ahmad et al., 2024;

Cite in APA style as:

Ilmi, K. (2024). Interpersonal Communication of Madrasah Heads in Increasing Teacher Work Motivation. *Business and Applied Management Journal*, 1(2), 104-117.

Safitri, 2024; Zaqiah & Rohimah, 2024). In the context of leadership, interpersonal communication holds significant importance (Abbas et al., 2022; Maisuroh & Aisyah, 2024; A. W. Zaini, 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). Leadership categorizes the role of interpersonal communication into three key areas. First, the role of a role model involves representing the institution during formal opportunities and addressing emerging challenges (Allen et al., 2022; Khotimah et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2022; Sanjani, 2024). Second, the role of a leader entails performing essential managerial functions leading, developing, controlling, and motivating while maintaining strong interpersonal relationships with subordinates (Abbas et al., 2022; Islamiah & Maulidiah, 2024; Ridwan, 2021; Ullah et al., 2022). Finally, the role of an intermediary includes obtaining information through interaction with staff, colleagues, and individuals outside the institution (Cirella & Murphy, 2022; Kosonen & Ikonen, 2022).

Interpersonal communication is vital for success in carrying out educational duties (Kilg et al., 2023; Munna, 2023; Susilawati et al., 2021). Therefore, educational leaders, such as the heads of madrasah, must possess effective interpersonal communication skills. Effective leaders foster satisfaction in communication, exhibit strong communication abilities, and can read the emotions of others (Arghode et al., 2022; Zuhdi et al., 2024). To achieve the objectives of the madrasah, the head must take on the responsibility and authority to administer, organize, and manage activities within the institution (Faiz et al., 2023; Hamdanah & Sholihah, 2023; Sugiri, 2022). This includes nurturing qualified teachers through motivation, coaching, and supervision, which ultimately enhances teacher performance. While maximizing productivity is important, the focus on quality is crucial for the madrasah's success. The head of the madrasah, acting as a manager, must motivate teachers, who are key to implementing effective education and teaching strategies (Malik et al., 2021; Purwanto & Wafa, 2023; Shah, 2024). Additionally, motivation understood as a psychological process plays a significant role in shaping the relationship between an individual's needs, attitudes, perceptions, and decisions.

To achieve optimal work results, teachers require strong work motivation, which refers to their ability to engage with their tasks effectively, thus ensuring that expected outcomes are met. Work motivation significantly influences both the quality and quantity of a teacher's output (Alimmudin & Basuki, 2022; Amini et al., 2022; Mulyana et al., 2021). In educational institutions, teachers are more likely to fulfill their responsibilities according to their capabilities when they receive adequate motivation. The strength or weakness of the motivational support provided to teachers directly impacts the accomplishments of the madrasah.

A crucial factor determining educational success is the teacher's role, complemented by the leadership of the madrasah head. Effective communication between the head of the madrasah and teachers is vital for achieving educational goals (Maruhawa et al., 2022; Salim et al., 2021; Shah, 2024). This communication helps the administration gauge the extent to which educators fulfill their responsibilities. When interpersonal communication is conducted appropriately between teachers and the madrasah head, it positively influences teachers' behaviors in their daily tasks, leading to improved performance (Rahmahdi, 2023; Suci et al., 2022). Conversely, ineffective communication can result in apathy, which negatively affects work outcomes, especially when conflicts or differing opinions arise. Therefore, fostering intensive, two-way communication is essential for achieving the madrasah's objectives (N. F. H. Naufal et al.,

2023; Qolby et al., 2023; Suryadi, 2023). This requires openness and harmonious cooperation between the head of the madrasah and the teachers. Furthermore, the head can enhance teacher performance by motivating educators through effective communication strategies. Thus, the interplay between work motivation and interpersonal communication from the head of the madrasah plays a crucial role in either improving or undermining teacher performance.

Previous research underscores the importance of this study. Susilo et al. (2023) highlighted that effective interpersonal communication in the Yogyakarta Ministry of Religion office led to enhanced performance among staff, demonstrating that leaders proficient in interpersonal communication positively influence workplace dynamics. However, some needs, such as self-transcendence and physiological needs, did not significantly impact interpersonal communication. Silaen et al. (2023) found that the head of the madrasah could implement effective communication strategies, including openness, empathy, and a positive attitude, which contribute to improved teacher performance. Similarly, research conducted by Amin et al. (2023) revealed a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of interpersonal communication from the madrasah head and their work discipline.

The current study builds on these findings by examining the specific context of MTs. Al Ishlah, focusing on the interpersonal communication of the head of the madrasah in enhancing teachers' work motivation, while also identifying both supporting and inhibiting factors. A novel aspect of this research lies in its emphasis on the unique dynamics within MTs. Al Ishlah, offering insights into how tailored communication strategies can specifically foster teacher motivation in this educational setting, which has not been extensively addressed in prior studies. This focus not only contributes to the existing body of literature but also provides practical implications for enhancing teacher engagement in similar contexts.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The approach used in this research emphasizes a qualitative understanding of the subject matter, focusing on the dynamics of relationships and events relevant to the study. This qualitative approach allows for a deeper exploration of educational phenomena and their intricacies, providing a comprehensive framework for data analysis and interpretation. According to Maxwell (2021), this method is particularly suitable for elaborating on complex phenomena, as it facilitates the development of nuanced conclusions that reflect the lived experiences of the participants. The study aims to investigate the interpersonal communication dynamics within the context of MTs. Al Ishlah, exploring how these dynamics influence teachers' motivation and overall performance.

Data collection in this research was carried out through three primary methods: interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including the head of the madrasa and teachers, to gather in-depth insights into their experiences and perspectives. Observational methods were employed to assess interactions and communication patterns within the educational environment. Additionally, documentation of relevant records and materials was analyzed to complement the qualitative data gathered through interviews and observations. This multi-faceted approach ensures a well-rounded understanding of the subject matter, allowing for triangulation of data sources.

The data analysis techniques employed in this study are based on the framework developed by Miles and Huberman (Williams, 2021). The analysis process involved three key stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction refers to the systematic process of focusing, summarizing, and abstracting the information collected from field notes, thereby streamlining the analysis. Following this, data presentation involves displaying the findings in various forms, such as narrative descriptions, charts, and flow diagrams, which facilitate a clearer understanding of the observed phenomena. Finally, conclusions are drawn from the analyzed data, with an emphasis on the significance of the findings and the potential implications for future research. This iterative process allows researchers to refine their insights continuously and adapt to emerging patterns in the data.

To ensure the validity of the data, several strategies were implemented throughout the research process. Triangulation of data sources helped cross-verify information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation, enhancing the credibility of the findings. Additionally, member checking was utilized, allowing participants to review the findings and provide feedback on the accuracy of the interpretations. By incorporating these validation techniques, the research aims to establish trustworthiness and reliability, ultimately contributing to a robust understanding of the interpersonal communication dynamics within MTs. Al Ishlah and their impact on teachers' work motivation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Role of Leadership in Building Motivation**

Research observations at MTs. Al Ishlah show that the application of participatory leadership style by madrasah heads significantly encourages teachers to contribute more actively to the learning process. During the observation, it was seen that the head of the madrasah routinely involved the teachers in discussions about the curriculum, teaching methods, and extracurricular activities. In these meetings, teachers are given the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas, which creates an inclusive and collaborative work atmosphere. Teachers seem more passionate and motivated to give their best in their teaching, feeling valued because their voices are heard in decision-making. This supportive environment at MTs. Al Ishlah not only increases teachers' confidence, but also creates a positive synergy between leaders and teaching staff, thus having a direct impact on the quality of the learning process in the school. This observation emphasizes the importance of participatory leadership style in creating a productive and empowering academic atmosphere among educators.

The leadership style of the head of the madrasah has an important role in encouraging the active participation of teachers in the learning process. This concept is in accordance with the results of interviews with school principals who stated that teacher involvement in decision-making is one of the key strategies in improving their motivation and performance. The principal stated, "I always try to involve teachers in every decision made, from curriculum selection to extracurricular activities. This makes them feel valued and recognized." The results of the interview explained that when teachers feel involved, they are not only more motivated, but also more committed to making the best contribution to teaching, creating a more productive and collaborative learning atmosphere in the madrasah.

The argument is in line with the Deputy Head of Curriculum who stated, "We always invite teachers to discuss curriculum development and teaching methods. When they feel they have a part in the process, they are more motivated and enthusiastic about teaching." The results of the interview explained that by actively involving teachers, madrasah heads not only increase their sense of ownership of the curriculum, but also build a collaborative and mutually supportive work atmosphere, which has a positive impact on the quality of learning in madrasas.

The leadership style of the head of the madrasah has an important role in encouraging the active participation of teachers in the learning process. This concept is corroborated by the results of interviews with the head of administration, which emphasizes the importance of teachers' involvement in decision-making to improve their motivation and performance. The head of administration stated, "When teachers are involved in planning activities and learning processes, they feel more appreciated. This makes them more enthusiastic and committed to their teaching duties." The results of the interview explained that by creating an atmosphere where teachers feel they have a voice, madrasah heads can build a positive and collaborative work climate, which in turn improves the quality of education in madrasas. This involvement not only motivates teachers, but also creates synergies that strengthen the effectiveness of the entire team in the madrasah environment.

The head of the MTs Al Ishlah madrasah applies various effective leadership concepts to motivate teachers, such as giving awards and appreciation, open communication, creating a positive work environment, and emotional support. Based on the results of the researchers' observations, the head of the madrasah routinely gives awards to teachers who show good performance, both through official announcements at meetings and personal awards, so that teachers feel appreciated and motivated to improve the quality of their work. In addition, madrasah heads establish effective communication channels, which allow teachers to feel comfortable in sharing opinions and innovative ideas, creating a sense of involvement and ownership towards the educational process. A conducive work environment is also a priority, where teachers feel safe and comfortable, which in turn increases morale and collaboration among them. Furthermore, the head of the madrasah shows concern for the welfare of teachers by listening to the complaints and challenges faced, providing much-needed emotional support in facing their professional challenges. The combination of all these elements as shown in Figure 1 creates a positive and productive atmosphere in MTs Al Ishlah, contributing to improved performance and motivation of teachers.

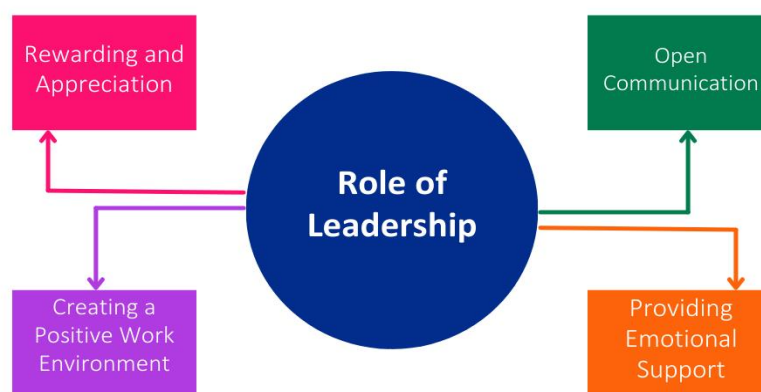


Figure 1. Role of Leadership

These findings reinforce the understanding that an inclusive leadership style and attention to teachers' emotional well-being, as practiced at MTs Al Ishlah, not only creates a positive work atmosphere but also contributes to improving the overall quality of education. The combination of these elements proves that an adaptive and responsive leadership approach to teachers' needs can create a productive and empowering academic atmosphere. As expressed by Salim et al. (2021), participatory leadership in educational institutions has been shown to significantly increase teacher motivation and performance. The study showed that when principals involve teachers in the decision-making process, they feel more valued and have a sense of ownership of the curriculum and school policies. This is in line with the findings at MTs Al Ishlah, where the principal routinely holds discussions with teachers regarding curriculum development and teaching methods, creating a supportive collaborative atmosphere. In addition, research by Rahmahdi (2023) highlighted that open communication and appreciation for teacher performance are important factors that increase teacher enthusiasm and commitment to teaching.

### **Strategies to Increase Work Motivation**

Research observations conducted by researchers at MTs Al Ishlah show that the implementation of various interpersonal communication strategies by madrasah heads has a significant positive impact on teachers' work motivation. In daily interactions, madrasah heads actively apply the principle of openness by conveying information transparently and inviting input from teachers, which contributes to the creation of mutual trust and a harmonious work environment. In addition, the attention given by the head of the madrasah in the form of empathy, such as asking about the welfare and listening to the difficulties faced by teachers, increases their emotional attachment and motivation. The researchers also noted that support in the form of clear communication, both in person and through the media, helps teachers feel cared for and motivated to contribute more. By providing a sense of positivity and trust to teachers, madrasah heads not only encourage work morale, but also create a pleasant atmosphere in the school environment. Equality in communication implemented by madrasah heads, where all teachers are treated fairly and given the opportunity to share opinions, also contributes to the improvement of the quality of work.

Observations made by researchers at MTs Al Ishlah revealed that the implementation of various interpersonal communication strategies by madrasah heads, especially in the aspects of openness, empathy, support, positivity, and equality, plays an important role in increasing teachers' work motivation. In terms of openness, madrasah heads consistently create an intimate atmosphere and reduce suspicion by conveying information transparently, both directly and through the media. This not only builds trust between staff and teachers, but also encourages teachers to actively provide input and feel more involved in decision-making. Furthermore, the empathy shown by the head of the madrasah by paying attention to the welfare of teachers, such as asking about the conditions and difficulties they face, creates a strong emotional bond and encourages teachers to work more enthusiastically.

The support provided in communication, both when the head of the madrasah is present in person and by phone when unable to attend, gives a sense of security to teachers and strengthens their motivation to contribute more. The sense of positivity that

is built through the trust and appreciation of the head of the madrasah, as well as an approach that seeks solutions to problems, helps teachers feel valued and motivated in carrying out their duties. Finally, the application of the principle of equality in communication where all teachers are treated fairly without discrimination, increases their active participation and quality of work. These effective communication strategies are interrelated and contribute to the creation of a positive work environment at MTs Al Ishlah as shown in table 1, which not only increases teachers' work motivation, but also improves the overall performance of the educational institution.

**Table 1. Motivational Enhancement Strategies**

Aspects	Description	Impact
Openness	- Create close relationships and reduce suspicion.	- Increase teachers' confidence.
	- The head of the madrasah conveys information directly or through other media.	- Encourage teachers to contribute more.
	- The information conveyed increases the trust and loyalty of teachers.	
	- Providing opportunities for teachers to improve their abilities.	
Empathy	- The head of the madrasah shows concern for the welfare of teachers by asking about their condition.	- Strengthens emotional connections.
	- Creating a comfortable and supportive working environment.	- Increasing the enthusiasm and dedication of teachers.
	- Using a psychological approach to appreciate teachers' efforts.	
Backing	- The head of the madrasah supports teachers through open communication.	- Provide a sense of security to teachers.
	- Communication can be done in person or by phone.	- Encourage teachers to be more proactive.
	- The presence of the head of the madrasah when communicating strengthens the relationship.	
Positive Feeling	- The head of the madrasah gives full trust to the teacher, accompanied by a positive example.	- Increasing teachers' morale.
	- Confront problems by looking for causes and solutions, not just providing conclusions.	- Encourage teachers' responsibility in carrying out their duties.
Equality	- The head of the madrasah applies the principle of equality in communication with all teachers.	- Encourage active participation from all teachers.
	- Information is delivered without discrimination, ensuring all teachers understand the message being conveyed.	- Improving the quality of teachers' work results.
	- All teachers are given the opportunity to express their opinions.	

Table 1 summarizes various aspects of interpersonal communication of madrasah heads that contribute to increasing teachers' work motivation. First, openness in communication creates close relationships and reduces suspicion, where the head of the madrasah conveys information in a transparent way, thereby increasing the trust and loyalty of teachers. Furthermore, empathy is shown through the madrasah head's attention to the welfare of teachers, which contributes to a comfortable and supportive work atmosphere, strengthens emotional connections, and increases teachers' morale. The support provided in communication, both directly and through other media, provides a sense of security for teachers and encourages them to be more proactive in carrying

out their duties. The sense of positivity instilled by the head of the madrasah by providing trust and good examples, as well as an approach that seeks to solve problems, plays an important role in encouraging teacher responsibility. Finally, the application of the principle of equality in communication ensures that all teachers feel valued and have the opportunity to participate, which in turn encourages a better quality of work. Overall, these aspects interact with each other to create a positive and productive environment in the madrasah, thereby significantly increasing teachers' work motivation.

The application of the principle of openness by the head of the MTs Al Ishlah madrasah which includes the delivery of information in a transparent manner and the provision of space for teachers to submit input, is in line with these findings. This shows that when teachers feel valued and included in the decision-making process, their work motivation will increase. In addition, the empathy shown by the head of the madrasah through attention to the welfare of the teachers, as well as the support provided in communication, is in line with the principles of leadership that create strong emotional bonds (Mulyana et al., 2021; Munna, 2023; Qolby et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the argument that the combination of openness, empathy, support, positivity, and equality in communication not only increases teachers' work motivation, but also results in better performance in educational institutions, as suggested in the existing literature (Kurniawan & Nurdin, 2023; Mahsusi et al., 2024; Subaidi et al., 2023). The importance of interpersonal communication strategies in increasing teachers' work motivation is highly emphasized. The research shows that effective leadership focuses not only on managing tasks, but also on developing positive relationships with subordinates.

### **Inhibiting and Supporting Factors**

Inhibiting and supporting factors play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of organizational dynamics, particularly in educational settings. Inhibiting factors are obstacles that hinder the motivation and performance of educators, such as lack of resources, inadequate support from administration, and negative interpersonal relationships among staff. These barriers can lead to decreased job satisfaction, lower morale, and ultimately impact the quality of education provided to students. On the other hand, supporting factors are elements that promote and enhance motivation, engagement, and productivity among educators. These can include effective leadership, clear communication, professional development opportunities, and a positive school culture that fosters collaboration and mutual respect. When educational leaders actively identify and mitigate inhibiting factors while reinforcing supporting factors, they create an environment conducive to high teacher motivation and performance. This balanced approach not only improves teacher well-being but also positively influences student outcomes, illustrating the interconnectedness of these factors in shaping a thriving educational institution.

Based on the results of interviews, observations and documentation, researchers can identify the factors hindering the implementation of interpersonal communication at MTs Al-Ishlah include differences in information security regarding both the delivery and the content of information, as well as communication disruptions that prevent teachers from receiving messages from the head of the madrasah directly. Conversely, several supporting factors facilitate effective interpersonal communication. First, a positive communication climate fosters collaboration. Second, there is a sense of happiness and mutual respect between the head of the madrasah and the teachers. Third,



mutual openness exists, allowing both parties to address any challenges collaboratively. Fourth, adequate resources for teachers support the completion of tasks. Fifth, the information and instructions provided by the head of the madrasah are clear and easily understood by the teachers. Sixth, loyalty and dedication stem from the school's vision, mission, and objectives. Seventh, there are designated spaces for communication between the head of the madrasah and the teachers. Lastly, communication tools, such as mobile devices, enhance interaction.

These inhibiting and supporting factors are crucial considerations for improving the motivation and performance of teachers at MTs Al-Ishlah. Observations during field research revealed several inhibiting factors, including limited resources and occasional communication gaps between administration and staff. Teachers expressed concerns about inadequate access to teaching materials and a lack of professional development opportunities, which undermine their motivation and effectiveness in the classroom. Additionally, unclear communication regarding school policies sometimes led to misunderstandings and decreased trust among educators.

Conversely, the study also highlighted numerous supporting factors present at MTs Al-Ishlah that foster a positive environment for teachers. The head of the madrasah effectively applied strategies of openness, empathy, and support in interpersonal communication. By maintaining transparent communication and actively listening to teachers' concerns, the administration demonstrated a commitment to creating a collaborative atmosphere. The head's willingness to seek input and provide constructive feedback reinforced teachers' sense of value within the institution. Moreover, the promotion of equality in communication, where all teachers felt equally heard and respected, significantly contributed to a culture of inclusivity.

These supportive measures not only mitigated some of the inhibiting factors but also enhanced overall teacher motivation and morale at MTs Al-Ishlah. The combination of effective leadership and a positive school culture served to counterbalance the challenges faced by educators, illustrating the importance of addressing both inhibiting and supporting factors in fostering a thriving educational environment. Ultimately, the research suggests that when educational leaders proactively engage with these dynamics, they can cultivate a workplace that not only enhances teacher satisfaction but also translates into improved student outcomes.

The analysis of inhibiting and supporting factors at MTs Al-Ishlah reveals a complex interplay that significantly influences teacher motivation and performance. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Lauren (2023), which emphasized that leadership styles profoundly impact educators' engagement and satisfaction within educational settings. The study at MTs Al-Ishlah indicated that while limited resources and communication gaps hindered teacher morale, the head of the madrasah's commitment to openness, empathy, and constructive feedback created a supportive environment that mitigated these challenges. This reflects the assertion that transparent communication fosters trust and collaboration among staff, essential for a harmonious school culture (Aisyah & Mustofa, 2024; Fathih et al., 2021). Additionally, the presence of effective communication tools and mutual respect between educators and administration served to enhance teachers' sense of belonging and loyalty to the institution. By recognizing the importance of both inhibiting and supporting factors, the research suggests that educational leaders must adopt a balanced approach to cultivate an atmosphere that not only supports teacher well-being but also leads to better student

outcomes, echoing the findings of Zaini (2024) regarding the critical role of supportive leadership in achieving organizational goals.

The findings of this research at MTs Al-Ishlah contribute significantly to the understanding of factors influencing teacher motivation and performance within educational institutions. By identifying both inhibiting and supporting factors, the study highlights the complexities of interpersonal communication and its impact on the overall school environment. Specifically, the research underscores the importance of effective leadership strategies, such as openness, empathy, and constructive feedback, in fostering a positive school culture that enhances teacher morale. Furthermore, the study provides practical insights for educational leaders, emphasizing the need to address communication gaps and resource limitations while simultaneously reinforcing supportive measures. These contributions not only enrich the existing literature on educational leadership and teacher motivation but also offer actionable recommendations for improving practices in similar educational settings. Ultimately, the research serves as a valuable resource for school administrators seeking to create an environment conducive to both teacher satisfaction and student success, reinforcing the idea that effective communication and strong leadership are pivotal in achieving educational excellence.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that the participatory leadership style applied by the head of the madrasah at MTs Al Ishlah has a significant impact on teacher motivation and performance. By involving teachers in decision-making related to the curriculum and teaching methods, madrasah heads have succeeded in creating an inclusive and collaborative work environment. This approach not only increases teachers' confidence and morale, but also builds positive synergy between leaders and teaching staff. In addition, the implementation of effective interpersonal communication strategies, such as openness, empathy, and support, contributes to increasing teachers' work motivation and creating a productive academic atmosphere in schools.

However, this study also has limitations that need to be considered. Observations and interviews are conducted for a limited time and only in one institution, so generalizing the results to other schools may not be entirely accurate. In addition, external factors that may affect teachers' motivation and performance, such as economic conditions and support from parents, have not been fully explored in this study. Therefore, further research is needed to comprehensively understand the dynamics of teachers' leadership and motivation in various educational contexts, as well as to explore the interaction between various factors that affect the work environment in schools.

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